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MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL SMITH

Suggested Introductory Remarks to JCS on Summary Evaluation

*Attach to my
personal copy of
yesterday's diary
(entire in diary book
AIE I
w/16 Dec. diary
abc)*

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1. As a basis for our discussion today I want to give you our draft proposals for the machinery and scope of a new and better summary evaluation of net Soviet capabilities to inflict direct injury on the US. Our staff has worked these up with some care and with the advice particularly of [redacted] and I have approved them in general as a starting point. I hope we can get your frank comment and criticism of these proposals. If we can approach agreement among ourselves, then we should both sit down with the internal security people and polish up a proposed directive for NSC action. I have no fixed deadline in mind but I hope we can iron this out at least by mid-January. (Query on pressing for NSC action before 1/20.)

2. Let me say right away that we have taken very careful note of the JCS comments on my original recommendations. I think we have met the major doubts and worries you had.

3. First, about machinery. We propose that the job be done under direct NSC aegis. As I explained at the NSC meeting, we never have had any thought that I or CIA would take over a job so heavily involving planning. As you pointed out in your comments, the NSC is the appropriate body under the 1947 Act. So we have provided that the NSC will appoint the Chairman, who will be responsible directly to it. The Chairman will have a working Committee representing you, ourselves, and the internal security side. ~~In our judgment any other type of working group is out of the question.~~ The NSC staff does not have the manpower, and even if it did it would be quite impractical - - and also very objectionable from my own standpoint and I think from yours - - to have them attempt to dig out the stuff for this study from scratch. Moreover, we certainly would not be happy without our own man in the working group. Again, I should think you would feel the same way.

4. In laying out the powers and functions of the working Committee, we have aimed above all at flexibility through continuing supervision by the Committee. If we learned any one thing in the last go-around, it was that set contributions, with coordination only at the end, will not do the job. Nobody can foresee at the start what questions will become crucial as the material develops; you drop some lines of attack, you emphasize others. Last time, when we sat down to produce the final paper, it became clear that a lot of vitally important questions had not been fully answered. The draftsmen improvised - - they had to to get the paper out - - and the result was that in your comments you quite properly pointed out that some of the most important conclusions were not supported in any contribution and were really only informed guesses. With a Committee on the job every step of the way, we can at least do our best to foresee questions and get answers in time to be of use.

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5. So these are the three things I want to emphasize about the machinery -- direct NSC sponsorship, a small but representative working Committee, and flexibility.

6. Now, about the scope of the study. We propose that it run through mid-1955, or for about two years from the date of completion. We thought the mid-1954 period proposed in your comments was too short for the kind of long-range planning that hinges on this study. At the same time we thought we probably couldn't see much beyond mid-1955 with sufficient clarity and details to be useful.

7. Geographically, we propose that the study cover the continental US and what we describe as "major US installations outside the US." That means particularly the key SAC base areas and the areas of vital importance to air defense of the US itself. It does not mean everywhere we have a lot of forces or raw materials or supplies, if those elements of our strength wouldn't come into our Sunday punch or air counter-offensive effort early in a war.

8. For a final deadline, we propose May 15. This would give us about four months of working time. Obviously, you could take four years if you wanted to. But it seems to me much more important to have the best possible result out in time for the new administration's first budget preparation, which will start in June or July.

9. Finally, let me call your attention to the kind of final paper that might emerge. You were worried that the paper would arrive at a single decision in a field in which JCS has primary responsibilities. We never had that in mind, and I don't see how this paper could end in a decision or specific recommendation for action even if we wanted it to. To use the 'commander's estimate' analogy correctly what we propose will at most proceed through paragraph 3 in which each enemy capability is analyzed against each of our courses of action and the result of the interplay forecast. Thus it is hoped that the paper will pick out all the possibilities that should be taken into account and, having done that, will say which appear the most likely of these and which the most dangerous from our point of view. That's the maximum guidance the paper can give, and it surely is the least that the new President and the members of the NSC are entitled to get.

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